



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

Post Office Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

June 1, 2007

The Honorable Andre Bauer
President of the Senate
State House, 1st Floor East Wing
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval S. 603, R-63.

This bill raises the current salary and expense allowance for members of the Colleton County School Board to no more than \$7,500 annually. Under the current law, members receive a \$2,000 salary and up to \$1,200 in expenses.

This administration has consistently advocated the notion that decisions on the operation of local schools should be made within the community and not simply mandates handed down by Columbia. Today there is a patchwork of authorities from one school board to the next, some having fiscal autonomy and others having none. In the case of Colleton County, the school budgets must be approved by the county council which has final say on most fiscal matters.

As a result of the variation in board autonomy and composition, there is significant variation in board pay across the state, ranging from those that provide board members no pay – 34 districts fall into this category – to those that offer board members as much as \$9,400 per year. I do not believe that the state should be in the business of micromanaging the affairs of every school board. Instead, we should give them the power to make decisions and make them accountable back to the people who put them in office. In the case of this bill, I applaud the intent by the bill sponsor to create a band of \$7,500 and give the school board flexibility to work within that band.

However, as is the case with most local bills, this legislation only perpetuates the uneven and disproportionate operations of school boards in the state. I disagree with the idea that we should continue down the path of the General Assembly sending bill after bill setting different standards for different boards. Instead, I believe the General Assembly should enact statewide legislation that lets each community make these decisions.

For this reason, I have vetoed S. 603, R-63.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford